

## On the nominate race of *Cisticola fulvicapilla* (Vieillot), 1817

by P. A. Clancey

Received 25 August 1982

*Sylvia fulvicapilla* Vieillot, 1817, is based on the La Fauvette Rousse tête of Levaillant (1802), who encountered the species in the Cape to the south of the Orange R. and specifically near Old Camdeboo, close to the present town of Graaff-Reinet in the east of the Province at  $32^{\circ} 12'S$ ,  $24^{\circ} 32'E$ , which is the accepted type-locality of the nominate race. In his major review of the genus *Cisticola*, Lynes (1930) gave the range of *C. f. fulvicapilla* as the Cape (except for ecologically unsuitable karoo country and the southwest) and Natal. Interestingly enough, Graaff-Reinet lies in the east of the Karoo and is well outside the currently established range of the species in the eastern Cape, the valley of the Great Fish R. being the western distributional limit in this sector.

In my revision of *C. fulvicapilla* (Clancey 1971), I refined the range of the nominate race to read "southern and eastern Cape, east from about George, Lesotho, Natal and Zululand, and, probably, western Swaziland"—this being adopted in the recent *S.A.O.S. Checklist* (Clancey 1980). In this revision it was pointed out that the population occurring on the periphery of the massif of Lesotho differs from the norm of nominate *fulvicapilla* in its greater size. Quickelberge (1972), in his report on 2 ornithological expeditions to the highlands of Lesotho, comments on the same 4 adult males from Moletsane (a remote outpost in northern Lesotho on the Maluti escarpment between Mamathes and Mapoteng at 6200 ft) which were commented on by Clancey in 1971, as demonstrating a redder, less brownish, pileum and lighter mantle when compared with the bulk of referred populations of nominate *fulvicapilla*. Two adult males taken in early August 1982 near the village of Rhodes ( $30^{\circ} 48'S$ ,  $27^{\circ} 28'E$ ), and now in the Durban Museum, show similar characters to those established for Lesotho birds by Quickelberge.

While no specimens from anywhere near the type-locality of *C. f. fulvicapilla* exist in museum collections, material is available from the karoid country to the east of the mid- and upper valley of the Great Fish R., northeast to the versant of the seaward facing escarpment of the Drakensberg Range and Lesotho.

This karoid element of the present nominate race of *C. fulvicapilla* is clearly different from the populations of the southern and eastern Cape to Natal and western Zululand currently associated with them. No name in synonymy is available for such populations. Hartlaub's *Camaroptera natalensis* of 1863 (proposed in Gurney, *Ibis* 1863: 323, pl. viii, Fig. 1), described on an Ayres skin from Pinetown, Natal, is pre-occupied in the genus *Cisticola* by *Drymoica natalensis* A. Smith, 1843: Durban, Natal. No name being available, the innominate populations may be known as

### *Cisticola fulvicapilla dumicola* subsp. nov.

*Type*: ♂, adult, Inanda, north of Durban, Natal, South Africa. Collected 8 May 1955 by Durban Museum personnel. In the collection of the Durban Museum, D. M. Reg. No. 2677.

*Description:* Differs from *C. f. fulvicapilla* of the karoid regions of the interior of the eastern Cape to the east of the mid- and upper valley of the Great Fish R., northeast to the Drakensberg escarpment and the Maluti of Lesotho, in having the vertex in moderately worn non-breeding dress (August) Argus Brown (Ridgway 1912) *versus* Dresden Brown, and with the dorsum deep Saccardo's Umber, the red-brown of the head-top diffused as a wash over the mantle and scapulars, and the tail rather redder; in worn breeding dress (from November) with the vertex darker, more chestnut and less ochraceous, and with the back rather blacker. The ventral surface in both plumages is about the same. The size ranges smaller than nominate *fulvicapilla*: wings in ♂♂ 48.5–51.5 (in nominate *fulvicapilla* to 54) mm.

*Material examined:* 50 specimens.

*Range:* Moist coastal regions of the southern and southeastern Cape from the George/Knysna region to coastal Transkei, Griqualand East, Natal (except Drakensberg escarpment country of extreme west), and western Zululand.

*Measurements of the Type:* Wing (flattened) 49.5, culmen from base 13, tail 40 mm.

*Remarks:* The name chosen is from the Latin *dumicola*: inhabiting thickets or coppices.

With the description of *C. f. dumicola*, the range of nominate *C. fulvicapilla* will stand as outlined in the above "Description".

References:

- Clancey, P. A. 1971. Miscellaneous taxonomic notes on African birds XXXII. *Durban Mus. Novit.* ix (5): 51–57.  
 Clancey, P. A. (Ed.). 1980. *S.A.O.S. Checklist of Southern African Birds*. p. 218. Southern African Ornithological Society: Johannesburg.  
 Levaillant, F. 1802. *Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux d'Afrique*. Vol. iii: 98, plate 124. Paris.  
 Lynes, H. 1930. Review of the genus *Cisticola*. *Ibis* Suppl. Ser 12 (6): 503–517.  
 Quickelberge, C. D. 1972. Results of two ornithological expeditions to Lesotho. *Durban Mus. Novit.* ix (17): 268.  
 Ridgway, R. 1912. *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*. The author: Washington, D.C.  
*Address:* Dr. P. A. Clancey, Durban Museum, P.O. Box 4085, Durban 4000, South Africa.

©British Ornithologists' Club 1983

## A new subspecies of the Usambara Weaver

### *Ploceus nicolli*

by N.—E. Franzmann

Received 14 August 1982

The affinity of the 2 East African weavers *Ploceus olivaceiceps* and *P. nicolli* has been disputed for some time. Both forms were originally described as separate species and were also treated as such by Mackworth-Præd & Grant (1960). It was apparently Moreau (1960: 465) who first suggested that *olivaceiceps* and *nicolli* were conspecific, repeating this in Peters' (1962: 56), but later (1966: 88) changing his mind. Hall & Moreau (1970: 292) considered *nicolli* "at least an incipient species". Britton (1980: 212) also treats *nicolli* as a colour form of *olivaceiceps*.